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SIPDIS

FOR A/S CARPENTER, PDAS BERGIN, DS/DSS, DS/OP/AF, DS/PSP/FPD,
DS/DSS/ITA, AF/EX AND AF/W

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [AEMR](#) [AMGT](#) [KCRM](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: EAC FINDS NIGERIAN POLICE PRESENCE ESSENTIAL

REFS: A) STATE 81577
B) ABUJA 00909
C) ABUJA 00214
D) Various e-mails between RSO Lagos/Abuja and DS/PSP/FPD

1. (U) Summary: Charge chaired a May 11 meeting of the Abuja EAC in response to ref A implication that Nigerian Police could not be paid by purchase request after May 31, absent a formally-concluded MOA. EAC members unanimously agreed that termination of police coverage would be most unwise, as it would materially degrade security of persons and information. Post requests the Department to extend permission to use the purchase request to pay Nigerian Police officers until the MOA is concluded. Consulate General Lagos will respond separately. End Summary.

2. (U) Ref A commences by offering Post information on the requirements of the VCDR. Nigeria's National Police Force (NPF) is the victim of more than two decades of malign neglect at the hands of successive military regimes. The NPF is aware of its responsibilities under the VCDR but is woefully short of the resources required to carry them out. The NPF notably lacks sufficient vehicles and fuel for the cars it has, as well as even rudimentary telecommunications capability. Individual officers are poorly and irregularly paid. This Mission, like most others, pays a stipend to the NPF personnel who protect its facilities and people.

3. (U) The Abuja EAC finds the Department's plan to eliminate the stipends, pending signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) by the NPF, a less-than-sensible response to the lack of a MOA. The stipends are intended to cover the expenses individual NPF personnel incur in protecting our facilities and people. The NPF personnel use them to pay for transportation to the places we want them to work, for food during their 24-hour duty shifts, for medicine when they get sick, and so forth. If we stop providing these stipends, the NPF personnel will stop working for us. These NPF personnel are not the persons holding up the MOA; the responsible individuals are desk-bound bureaucrats in NPF headquarters (and probably elsewhere) who have little or no appreciation for the circumstances under which their rank-and-file subordinates must labor. These bureaucrats know their VCDR obligations and are ready to tell us that help us just a telephone call away. Of course, most calls either do not go through or go unanswered. In the rare event that a call is answered, the caller is told to send a vehicle to pick up the police (who either have no fuel or no vehicle). These bureaucrats really do not care if the MOA is never concluded; they do not really oppose it. It just is not a priority. There are plenty of diplomatic missions and private citizens willing to pay for police protection. If we want the MOA, we have to push for it.

4. (U) The Abuja RSO has continually met with senior NPF officials during the past six months in an effort to gain approval of the MOA. The MOA has passed through several offices in the NPF, with the RSO shepherding it forward every step of the way. The NPF recently advised the RSO that the MOA was awaiting Foreign Ministry (MFA) approval. The DCM raised the issue with a senior MFA official, who denied any knowledge of the matter and requested a copy of the proposed MOA (actually, two MOAs - one for Abuja and one for Lagos). Post provided the copy and intends to follow up with the MFA official during the week of May 14. The decision-making process in Nigeria generally moves at a torpid pace, with all decisions referred slowly and less than steadily up the chain of command of each Ministry before being referred to the next. NPF officials have indicated their willingness to sign the MOA(s), and the RSO is confident they ultimately will. The EAC doubts very much that signing will take place before the end of May.

5. (U) The Mission will continue to pursue a signed MOA vigorously, raising its importance to us and the benefits it offers the NPF on every appropriate occasion. We are prepared to call upon our most senior contacts in the GON security hierarchy for intervention if a breakthrough does

not take place soon. However, even when these very senior contacts intervene, it can take many weeks, perhaps months, for their intervention to produce the desired result - so obdurate can the Nigerian bureaucracy be.

16. (U) Eliminating the stipends will not make the Nigerian bureaucracy move faster. What it will do is deny this Post the benefit of armed protection. We have no Marine Guards, and our local guard force is unarmed. We rely on the armed NPF personnel to deter those who might seek to do us harm or enter our offices forcibly. If one of our people is in an accident or attacked, he or she can call by radio for help. We count on the armed NPF personnel attached to our REACT vehicles to respond in emergencies. Our local guard force transports them, but it is the AK-47s and well-known black uniforms of the NPF that quiet an angry crowd. Even a minor accident generates a huge crowd that is always hostile toward the foreigner involved. Over and over again, the NPF officers assigned to our REACT vehicles have proved themselves effective in quelling a hostile crowd. Local criminals frequently attack vehicles traveling from the airport to the city at night. NPF officers assigned to the REACT vehicles are essential to ensuring the security of persons and materials (many classified) being brought from the airport into the city.

17. (U) The Charge chaired the EAC meeting, with the following sections/agencies represented: Administration, Political, Economic, Consular, PAS, DAO, PAS, USAID, RAO and RSO. All found the proposal to eliminate the stipends ill advised and poorly aimed. Stopping the stipends will not make the Nigerian bureaucracy move faster, but it will frighten and destabilize the Official American Community in Abuja. It will present a small but (because of what is at stake) very important risk to our office compound which lacks any armed protection other than the NPF personnel. Those present agreed that the first incident in which an American employee or family member was involved and NPF response was delayed or never came at all would provoke mass requests for curtailment and SMA.

18. (U) The EAC therefore urgently requests the Department to reconsider its plan to eliminate NPF stipends and to extend the current purchase order system until the MOAs are signed. Post's vigorous efforts to bring the Nigerians to the signing table will continue.
Andrews